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Subject: A Moral And Ethical Dilemma

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President Abbas Revelations And My Ethical Dilemma

Dear friends and colleagues,

As journalists, we often find ourselves managing the conflict between our personal opinion and our professional ethics. This is especially true when you are covering security and intelligence issues, as I do. More than once in my career I was warned that a publication of mine might harm intelligence assets or ongoing efforts, and more than once I was forced to rely on my own judgment in those situations.

Recently, however, I faced a dilemma of a different nature - I became aware of consistent, and recent, stances expressed by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas about Jewish holocaust. I learnt that on multiple occasions Abbas disputed the existence of gas chambers, the numbers of Jews killed, and even publicly suggested some wild conspiracy theories - that the Zionist movement took active part in the "final solution".

Unlike Israeli PM and his government, I believe that despite his shortcomings Abbas is the only relevant partner in an Israeli Palestinian peace effort, and that Israel should engage with him in vigorous negotiations with intention to end the historic conflict between the two peoples.

I knew therefore, that publishing this story will arm Israeli right wing with new arguments against negotiating with Abbas. I will be adding fuel to a raging flame, at the most unfortunate timing.

However, refraining from publication for political reasons stands against my fundamental belief in objective coverage, and journalistic morals.

The publication in Hebrew 3 weeks ago happened just as I expected - Israeli ambassador to the US, a close supporter of Benjamin Netanyahu, even used it in a public speech against Abbas. Many of the talkbacks on the *Yedioth Aharonot* website, *Ynetnews*, were hateful and shameful.

You can read the English translation of the piece on Ynet at this link posted today**,** and consider the situation for yourself.

As of now, I stand behind my decision to go ahead with publication, despite how it was used. If any of you feels otherwise, I would be happy to hear your view on things.

Best,

Ronen

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